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SONA'S ADVENTURES



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A mother camel and her young son, Sona, were slowly walking along in the desert. It was a very hot day. In the bright sun the burning yellow sand shone. Suddenly Sona stopped and dug his feet into the sand.

"I won't go any further," he grumbled.
"I am very thirsty. I want water."

His mother looked down at him and said,
"I know you must be thirsty, my dear. But it won't be for long. Water is near. Look."

She stretched her long neck towards a line of trees some distance away.

"You see those trees there? In deserts where there are trees, there is water. There might even be a village. Anyway, there will be other animals and you can play with them. Come now."







"How lovely!" said Sona and began walking fast. Soon they reached the trees. Mother lifted her head and sniffed.

"Come this way," she said turning left. "I smell water quite near."

Surrounded by tall trees and thick bushes, they found a pool of clear, cool water. Lowering their heads they drank deeply. A crow sitting on a tree nearby watched them.

"What a lot of water you drink!" he burst out when Sona and his mother finally finished. "You drink more than any other animal I've ever seen. I'm sure," continued the crow shaking his head from side to side, "you could drink the pool dry."



"No we couldn't," laughed the mother camel. "But you are quite right. We camels drink gallons of water at a time."

"Why?" asked the crow.

"We live mostly in deserts where water is difficult to find. But we don't really mind because we can go without water for days. In our stomachs we have a separate compartment to store water. Besides when we don't get water, our bodies can produce it. Do you know when we last had a drink of water?"

"When?" asked the crow who was finding these strange animals very interesting.

"Five days ago," replied the mother camel.

"Five days!" exclaimed the crow in amazement and he flew off to tell the other animals.









When Sona heard this he felt proud.
“We are very special, aren’t we Mother?”
he said.

“Of course,” said Mother.
The camels sat down in the shade of the
trees. Mother soon began to doze.

“Go to sleep, Sona,” said Mother.
“No, I’m going exploring,” said Sona and
wandered off.

The crow had already spread the news about the camels. The older animals heard what the crow said with little interest, but the younger ones at once set off to see these peculiar animals. They hid behind bushes and rocks so that they could see without being seen.





They saw Sona wandering about. The talkative rabbit jumped out of a bush and sitting on his hind legs stared at Sona. Suddenly he burst out laughing.

"Who are you and what are you laughing at?" asked Sona angrily.

"You. Haw, haw, haw!" laughed the rabbit. "You look so funny. The crow told us you were wonderful animals. You are not wonderful at all. You are ugly and silly-looking. Look at those long, long legs, that funny humped back, and that neck—haw, haw, haw!"









The other animals began to laugh too — the goat, the pig, the deer, the fox and others. They surrounded Sona and began making fun of him.

“What’s your name?” asked the pig. “What’s that big hump on your back. Let’s call him Humpy. Haw, haw, haw!”

“No, no,” said the goat. “We’ll call him Flat Foot. Look at those ugly, long legs and those funny flat feet.”

The goat jumped up and down showing off his lovely slim legs.

“What about that silly long neck! Haw, haw, haw!”

“And have you seen his tail?” cried the fox pointing to Sona’s short little tail. “Look at my beautiful tail,” he added proudly waving his bushy tail.

“Don’t make fun of him,” said the deer who was kind and gentle. “Look at my tail, it is just as small.”

Poor Sona did not know what to say.
Feeling very hurt and angry he ran to his mother.
All the way he could hear their laughter. Only
the deer did not make fun of him.

When Sona saw his mother he burst into
tears.

“What’s the matter?” Mother asked.

More tears rolled down Sona’s cheeks.

“I don’t like the animals. They are horrid.



They made fun of me and called me names—Humpy, Flat Foot. I'll never play with them," he cried and told his mother all that had happened.

"Come now, don't cry," said Mother. "They laugh at you because they are silly. They don't know why we have humps. If they did, they would want to have humps too. Why, they'd even want to have our flat feet."



"But they are so ugly. Why do we have them?"

Mother said, "You remember what I said about the way we store water. The hump is where we store fat. When we get nothing to eat for days this fat is our store of food."

"How?" asked Sona.

"When we eat," replied Mother, "part of our food turns into fat and collects in our humps. When we find little or no food for days in the desert, this fat prevents us from getting weak with hunger. It gives us the strength to walk on till we come to an oasis like this one where there is food and water."







“And what about our long legs and ugly flat feet?” asked Sona.

“Don’t call them ugly, son,” said Mother. “They are very useful. With our long legs we can walk fast and if our feet were not round and flat they would sink deep in the sand and get stuck. If other animals knew this they would envy us.”



"And our long necks, what use are they?" asked Sona feeling much happier.

"We have very long legs so we have to have a long neck," replied Mother. "Otherwise how could we reach anything on the ground? Our long necks also help us to reach leaves on tall trees and see far, far away. Our humps, our long legs, our flat feet and our long necks are all of great use to us. You should be proud of them."

Sona was now very happy. He ate up all the fresh green leaves his mother had broken for him. Then he fell asleep.





The next day he set off again. The rabbit, the fox, the pig and the goat were playing. Sona did not even care to look at them. Head held high, he went his way.

"Let's follow him," said the fox.

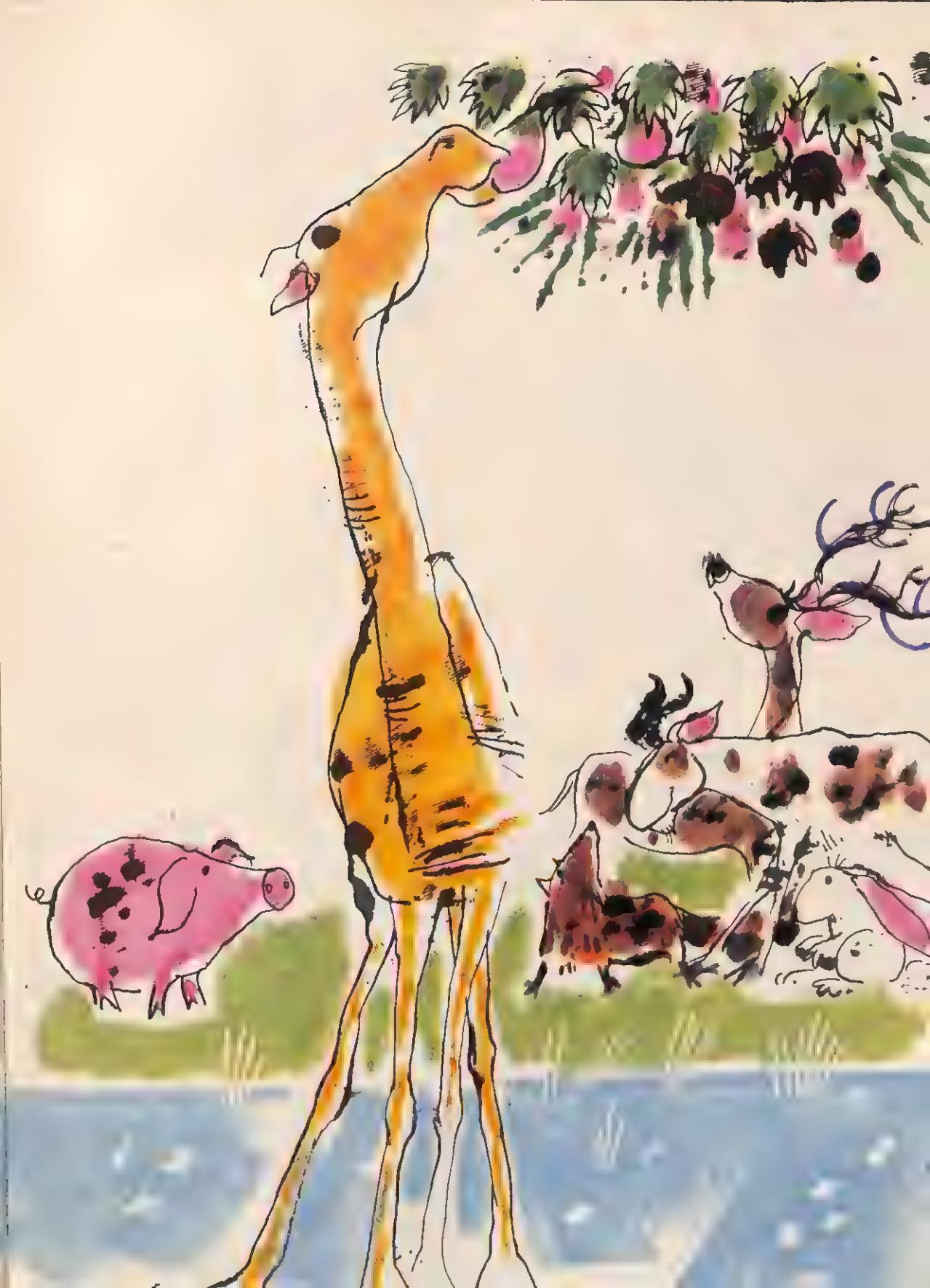
They followed him laughing and making fun of him. Sona paid no attention. He kept on walking.

A fig tree grew at the edge of a pool. Its big ripe fruit was very tempting. Sona lifted his head, pulled down a few figs and tasted them. They tasted as nice as they looked. Soon Sona was eating his fill.

The others watched him. All of them wanted to eat the fruit but the branches were too high.

"Do you think he will give us some if we ask him nicely?" asked the deer.

"I'm not going to ask him," said the goat proudly. "I'll get some for us. You know I can climb anything."



Standing on his hind legs, the goat put his forelegs on the tree and stretched his neck to reach a branch. He stretched and stretched, lost his balance and splash! fell into the pond.

“Help! Help!” he cried.







All his friends ran to the edge of the pool but none of them could help him. They were all too small to get him out of the water. They turned to Sona.

"Oh, please help him!" they all cried together.
"You are so big."

Sona quickly waded into the pool.

"Get on my back," he said and lowered himself. The goat climbed on his back gratefully. Sona carried him safely to the edge.



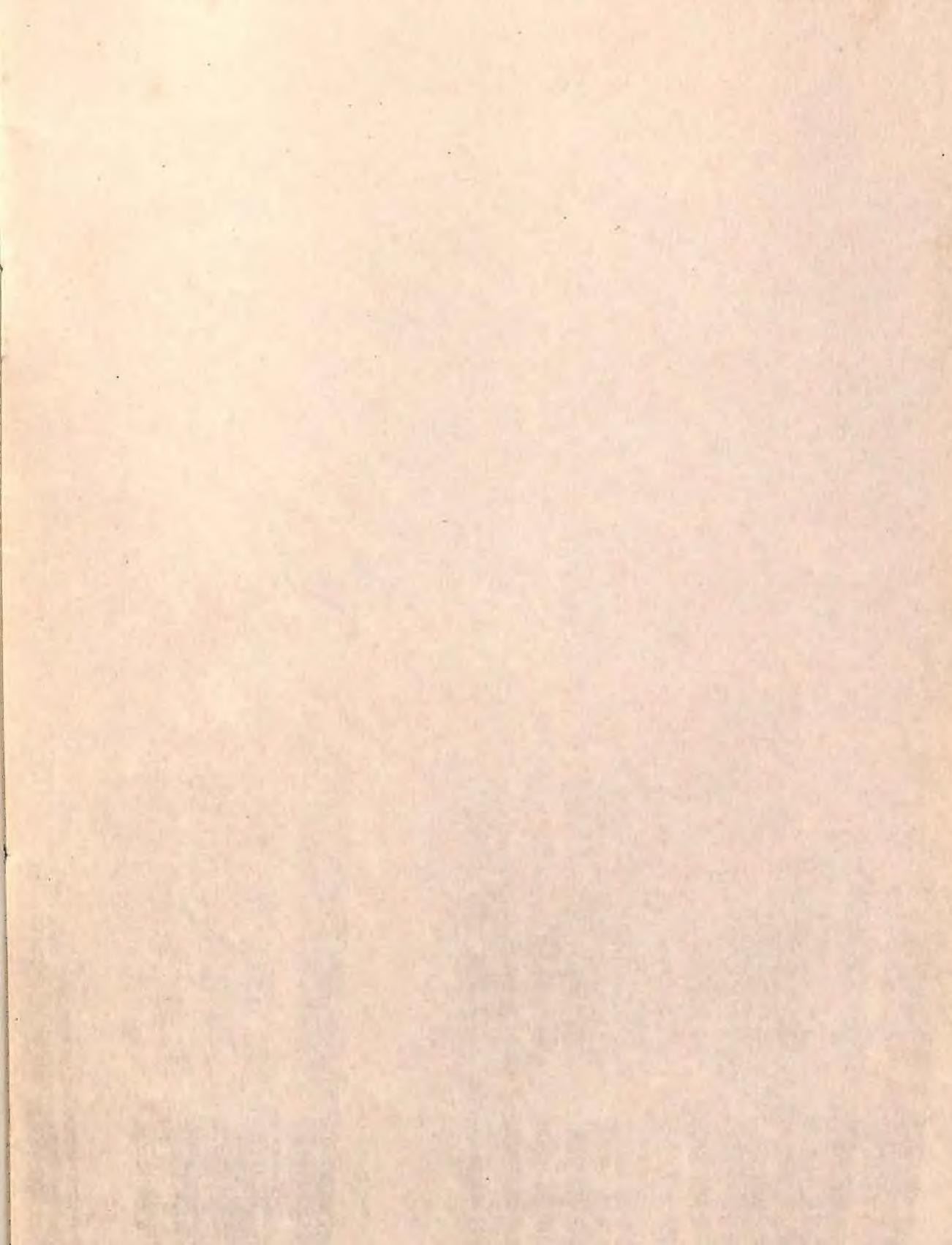
"Thank you. It was very kind of you. I am sorry I made fun of you. Let's be friends," said the goat.

"Come and play with us," said the rabbit.
"And give me a ride as you gave the goat."

"Come on," said Sona feeling very happy.

And from that day they all became good friends.







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